

STOREFRONT

ART AND ARCHITECTURE

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LOWER MANHATTAN BUILDING TO BECOME SITE OF MAJOR PUBLIC ART PROJECT BY
VITO ACCONCI AND STEVEN HOLL

Exhibition Schedule: November 13 thru December 30, 1993

Gallery Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 12-6 pm

Opening Reception: November 13, 6-8 pm

NEW YORK, November 13th 1993, the celebrated wedge-shaped building that houses Storefront for Art and Architecture, a New York City non-profit institution known internationally for its often daring exhibitions, installations and other programs, as well as for conferences exploring issues at the vanguard of contemporary aesthetics and urbanism, will be transformed into a site-specific public artwork on the frontier between the SoHo and Little Italy districts.

The project will be the largest ever undertaken by Storefront and the first in an ambitious series of commissioned projects with artists and architects, to be developed singularly or in collaboration. The physical metamorphosis of this Lower Manhattan landmark into an ever-changing puzzle of spaces opened and closed to the street is a joint effort by artist **Vito Acconci** and architect **Steven Holl**. Their work, which will remain in place from November 13, 1993 through the end of June 1995, has been conceived as both a formal, sensual exercise and a challenge to the definitions - and implications - of interior and exterior spaces and as an expression of public and private life.

Located at the intersection of Lafayette and Kenmare Streets in New York City, The **Acconci/Holl Project** will be viewed by millions of city residents and visitors. It will be documented extensively in an edition of Reports, a regular publication of Storefront for Art and Architecture.

Major funding for The **Acconci/Holl Project** has been received from the **Lannan Foundation** in Los Angeles; the **Bohen Foundation**; the **Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts Inc.**, from New York, and the **Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts** in Chicago. Additional support for the Project was provided by the **Visual Arts and Public Art Programs of the National Endowment for the Arts** in Washington D.C.

Vito Acconci and Steven Holl were commissioned to collaborate on the Project in January 1993 by **Kyong Park**, founder and executive director of Storefront for Art and Architecture, and **Shirin Neshat**, the institution's managing director. Mr. Acconci, a native New Yorker born in the Bronx in 1940, is an internationally acclaimed and widely exhibited artist working in many mediums with a special interest in formal and philosophical analyses of the modern built world. Steven Holl, founder and principal designer of Steven Holl Architects in New York and a professor at Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture and Planning, is widely considered one of the most influential architects and architectural theorists of his generation.

The Acconci/Holl Project was co-organized by **Claudia Gould**, a curator in the field of contemporary art and design who, in 1992, founded on the table inc. , a not-for-profit organization formed to realize contemporary arts projects in the United States and overseas. In 1992, Ms Gould, formerly Curator of Exhibitions at the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, Ohio, organized the acclaimed public art project "Kawamata: Project on Roosevelt Island" with Japanese sculptor Tadashi Kawamata.

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Since its beginning in 1982, Storefront has served as a non-traditional laboratory for innovation and experimentation in art, architecture and related fields, and a forum for dialogue about the social and political issues plumbed, both deliberately and inadvertently, through these disciplines. "Storefront's mission is not to prescribe points of view, but to invite alternative thinking by creative people and the general public alike. " commented Kyong Park. "We are very consciously devoted

to a degree of openness and mutuality that is not customarily part of the agenda of the art and architecture establishments. Our mandate is also to offer creative people opportunities to actually make new work, whether alone or in collaboration, and to generate conversation and constructions across geographical and ideological boundaries. With these things in mind, it is a particular privilege to have Vito Acconci and Steven Holl engaged in a project that so eloquently expresses, in physical form, Storefront's philosophical and programmatic direction."

BY TURNS EBULLIENT AND DISCREET

In simplest terms, The Acconci/Holl Project will be an installation in which the artists have altered the Kenmare Street facade of Storefront's building by puncturing it with four monumental, custom designed, revolving metal plates. Functioning as both doors and walls, these plates can be moved into different positions - varying states of opened and closed - which, in turn, subvert the traditional interior safe space of the diminutive triangular building (which is only two feet wide at its narrow end.) Thus, at times, Storefront's inside will be an ebullient extension of its immediate outside, exposed physically, visually and aurally to the street and engaged literally in the character and activity of the neighborhood.

On other, seemingly less democratic days, the facade will assume its cladded feeling when the plates are more fully closed and interiors become discrete. Exhibitions and the programs of Storefront will continue regardless of the position of the plates.

By blurring the distinction between the art object and architectural space and structure, The Acconci/Holl Project will also directly address Storefront's concern with inter-disciplinary collaboration. "Vito Acconci and Steven Holl's intervention is to be visually beguiling," said curator Claudia Gould. "But this work should also evidence the ways in which architects and artists can engage each other with results that benefit their fields and the public."

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Another integral participant is **Face Fabrications**, an architectural collaborative based in New York City, who took on the task of design development and building of this project. Their strategy of the indivisibility of design and construction is reflected by the mutual achievement of aesthetic

and craft in this project. Their other projects include the Holly Solomon Gallery, the offices of Christopher Johnson Associates and precast concrete furniture for the New York Headquarter of SONY Corporation.

INSTITUTIONAL GROWTH

The Acconci/Holl Project coincides with the 12th anniversary of Storefront for Art and Architecture and signals a new phase of growth for the institution. The Project will be the first in a new series of long-term commissions to Artists or Architects or pairs of these in collaboration with Storefront and incorporating the institution's physical plant.

According to managing director Shirin Neshat, Storefront will continue in coming years to foster the participation of young and lesser-known artists, architects and writers who have not yet attracted broad attention and acclaim. The institution will, however, also initiate programs which challenge established figures to make new work and chart new territory in their fields.

Storefront's ongoing schedule of activities, including exhibitions, installations, the annual ECO-TEC International Forum, lectures, symposia, publishing activities and spontaneous actions, will continue. Additionally, Storefront for Art and Architecture plans to expand its own network of alliances with cultural institutions, conducting programs "nomadically" in other cities and countries.

Storefront for Art and Architecture, located at 97 Kenmare Street on the northeast corner of the intersection with Lafayette Street, maintains public hours from 12:00 pm to 6:00 pm, Tuesday through Saturday. Additional information about upcoming programs can be obtained by telephoning 212.4315795.